



# Jencylde World

I am the proud though somewhat guilty owner of a super – ultra – amazing -fold your socks - kind of computer and therefore have a means to write another edition of your favourite newsletter. Other than running out of ink for my bubble jet – yes, a bubble jet, don't laugh - last year, my old computer (a.k.a. 'door stop') was just too out of date and no longer a pleasure to sit at since I was also spoiled at work with a *sweet* Mac OS 10 – what a beauty! So began the dark ages for all of you Jencylde fans. Well, this issue is dedicated to you!

So, due to **overwhelming** demand, i.e. Guy, my friend Brenda's husband, and a few others, **WELCOME!!!** to another fascinating and up to the moment, or at least *year*, account of my life – and, of course, Clyde & Hal's too.

Who's Hal? Well, he's our new roommate & happens to be a really lovey dovey, playful, and very fuzzy cat. More details to follow later on.

Anyways, I just downloaded a trial version of Word 2007 so here I am fiddling with formatting, learning a new program, and hopefully entertaining the masses. Enjoy this latest edition of Jencylde World.

## *Trying to not waste my life...*

I am now (*deep breath & suck in gut*) 33 and despite a relative state of contentment I have little flashes of anxiety – what am I doing? should I be doing something else? should I be somewhere else? what is my purpose?

I look back and see the many directions I could have gone, but I do not feel much regret just curiosity. Where would I be if I had gone on a trip to Europe right after High School? Or if I had gotten into a Master's Program? Would I feel more sure of myself or would I still be searching for something. Maybe I would have ended up as the globe-trotting Indiana Jones type person I use to imagine but would I have been any happier? Perhaps a little bit more *satisfied*? But, reality is, well, reality, which leaves me with the present & my questions. How can I fix or at least improve my situation?

Well, writing again has helped. I also updated my old website & started a real blog – perhaps a little trendy but it's very therapeutic. I am trying to exercise – so far only in a theoretical sense, but I'm working on it. And, I have started volunteering at the Zoo which has

been wonderful. Then there are my creative pursuits such as quilting, sewing, knitting, crafting, drawing, stamping, & music. If I just turn off the T.V. rather than channel surf my evenings away I can actually get a fair amount done and when I finally finish a project I feel so exhilarated that I can't wait to start the next one. I think this is a good start because I **am** doing things, I **am** somewhere, & my purpose is essentially to continue & do what I can.

Cheeseball? A slacker's motto? Perhaps, but I damn well have to enjoy life before I'm dead and if I happen to accomplish something before then well bonus for me and the world! And, maybe when I'm 50 I'll become a famous entrepreneur and have my own jet. Or maybe not.



Best movies that I actually saw in the theatre in 2006:

Ice Age 2, Nacho Libre, Thank You For Smoking

Best books I read:

*Wicked* by Gregory Maguire, *Picture Maker* by Penina Keen Spinka, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* by J.K. Rowling

Best T.V. shows: Lost, The Office, My Name is Earl, Heroes

# Jennifer Does Whitehorse - twice!

Yes, I went to Whitehorse, or as I kept saying it "up north". Not that Whitehorse wasn't an exciting prospect in & of itself but I have ALWAYS wanted to go "up north" which for me is technically anything north of Hecla Island in Manitoba. What it meant to me though was the *Territories* – the North, polar bears, tundra. All of these things I've seen on T.V. or read about but never saw in person. However, once I got there I realized it wasn't as far north as I envisioned, and in fact was quite B.C. like, except that the trees were not as tall because they have a proper Prairie-like winter to deal with. It was cold enough, though, to make me still feel like I was VERY far north, and on an exciting adventure.

The yearly Sourdough Rendezvous was going on & I have to say it is crazy fun. They have Can Can dancers going from event to event – we even saw them at the Curling rink. The Snowshoe Shufflers who are an elite group of ladies who dress up in long underwear, too-toos & snowshoes & perform. There's the Sams contest which involves teams of 2 Sams (male contestants) who put on a non-talent talent show & then viewers vote for the best Sam. There's also maple syrup on a stick – messy & good but my toes froze waiting, snow/ice carving like for the Festival du Voyageur in Winnipeg, and many other activities – special mention to the YuKong sculpture, awesome!. We also went to see Top Cover a U.S. Military cover band that have local groupies & were surprisingly quite good.

One problem was my lack of suitable winter wear, I did try to prepare but going from 10+ to -20 was just too much. After 1 or 2 days I went from double to triple layers – thank God I had long johns(\$19.99 at Marks Work Warehouse) I enjoyed my hosts' (Janet & Jeff) cozy house and was somewhat afraid to go out the front door. We played Carcassonne, this

great board game many times. But, I eventually became acclimatized & was ready to go dog sledding.

Yep, *DOG SLEDDING* – me, the big shot adventurer & dog sledder natural by the by. That was probably the most exciting thing I have ever tried and there were cute dogs everywhere. Marty, our guide, was quite the outdoorsman & made us put on appropriate clothing – such as these giant moon boots & we got hot shots (or 'hot pockets' – I kept forgetting then & I still am not sure which is which, one is to eat & the other is to keep warm so it's the warm one). This was incredibly handy due to my lack of suitable clothing and I truly believe I could have froze to death if I had gone as is. I got to be first on the sled, Janet G. & I shared, and that was a little nerve-wracking at first.

The dogs went crazy when we started getting the sleds ready. The younger or more lively ones barked & pulled at their leashes to make their desire to go with us known. The older or tired ones stayed curled up on the roofs of their kennels or inside, completely ignoring us. Then the teams were assembled & got booties so they wouldn't get frost bite. They don't care for these so would continually try to pull them off and one of our duties was to keep an eye on them & put the booties back on if necessary.

So, there I was dog sledding, yelling commands like "ji", it was exhilarating! And then I fell off – well, actually I got off to push us up an embankment and then fell flat on my face as the dogs took off. Luckily they only get a few feet before Marty & Janet G. were able to stop them. We were told that they won't stop if they have the chance – they'll just keep running until they drop. Phew! I got back on & felt like I could do the Ididarod. It was great – cold – but great!

Then there was trip #2 in July which was for Jeff & Janet's wedding, though to be brutally honest was also

for Carcassonne and Alaska. *The University Friends*, as I liked to call us, rented a car & hit the road to Skagway Alaska the day before the wedding and it was a beautiful drive. You actually hit the tree line so there were mini-trees which I took a picture of but it ended up looking like shrubbery.

I was so excited to be going to Alaska I almost exploded & my sunglasses actually did crack from the anticipation. Really! We took a crap load of pictures at the Alaska sign – Proof! – and spent a few hours in Skagway which is really a fun touristy town. Lots of heritage buildings, wooden walkways, an old saloon – the Red Onion which you can take a brothel tour in– and a zillion T-shirts. We went to this great pub/restaurant specializing in fish & chips & they had bras in the fish nets hanging from the ceiling – strange but true. There was a palm tree made out of the lids of tin cans. And there were ads & stuff painted all over the cliffs there. It's a Cruise Ship port so there was a stream of tourists walking to & from the big ship. I bought a lot of stuff for my Mom & a Red Onion shot glass for myself.

The next day we took a school bus to Haines Junction for the wedding & I took Loki duty so got to walk her a few times. Yep, she's their dog. My shoes hurt my feet since they were pretty shoes, not walking shoes, but I would do it again since she's such a cutie. There were other dogs there too so once or twice I walked with another dog owner from the wedding guests. It was a beautiful place and it was nice that the sun stayed up just a little bit longer there too.

I would recommend visiting Whitehorse winter or summer and if you can take Air North from Vancouver because they feed you well, give you candy and two beverages! It's fantastic!

## Getting Comfortable With Cleavage

I have hesitantly entered the world of cleavage exposure, which for most of you ladies is a tried & true expression of your femininity (or at least a way to get out of paying the handyman, or maybe getting into a bar before the 60 other people in line). For me however, it is as alien as the Canadian Shield is to a Great White Shark. I have worn v-neck shirts that may *imply* cleavage but don't actually put it on display. Then there are the button up tops that are not buttoned all the way up. I have worked around my cleavage and never quite embraced it, at least in a metaphorical sense.

Every time I saw it on myself I felt awkward & would continually pull at my shirt to hide it, like when you have a damaged wall & put furniture in front of it so your guests won't notice. But having a mild mid-life crisis caused me to reevaluate my sensibilities. Clearly, I'm not a flirt and only 2% of the population prefers red-heads so how can I compensate? Well, I've got boobs so it's bloody well time I took advantage of that. A well fitted top, a smidgen of cleavage, these are things that make me look like a woman, and not an awkward teenager anymore. Oh, and what I call the Woman Purse, helps too (these are purses that are "seasonal" & may even match your outfit – a far cry from my backpack of the past).

I feel that in order to grow, at least emotionally - the objects in question are big enough in my opinion - I can no longer let those feelings of inadequacy & self-loathing hinder me. I have great cleavage and I'm not afraid to show it (or at least just a little bit of it, I don't want to look like a whore! My Mother would freak!).

## Oooh Stamps!

One of my recent obsessions is stamps. Depending on your perspective, this could be a serious problem or an opening into an exciting world of stamping. When I looked at the bill I thought, "Yeah, this is a serious problem" but before that I thought, "Oooh, what fun!" This is a recurring behaviour that I seem helpless to change. Here is how I become obsessed & feel bad about it later:

- Step 1. See something and think, "That's neat!"
- Step 2. Someone I trust encourages me to try this new something.
- Step 3. I think about it for a while and decide I just can't afford this new something.
- Step 4. Someone I trust (same as in Step 2 or someone else depending on the situation) says, "Sure you can!"
- Step 5. I think "You're right, I just have to be more thrifty..." and decide to try it.
- Step 6. I spend a crap-load of money & feel horrible about it.
- Step 7. I open the something's package & enjoy the warm fuzzy Christmas-like sensation.
- Step 8. I look at my bill and feel ill.
- Step 9. I vow to get my money's worth on this new something.
- Step 10. A year later I think, "Why the hell was I so obsessed with that something? What a waste of money...If I had only saved my money I could afford this new something!"

So, will this stamp obsession be any different? I have made some cards but since I always forget people's birthdays do I really need that many cards? I want to use them for my Christmas crafting but that would involve buying special Christmas stamps, ie. *more* money. When will the spending stop? I can see a long line of obsessions from when I was in elementary school and desperately wanted a turtle to my spending spree during Boxing Week. What drives me to these new obsessions? Do I need to experience that Christmas-like feeling to mask a deeper unhappiness? Am I looking for that one all-encompassing something that will satisfy me through eternity? Or is it something more sinister? I just don't know why I can't settle down & save up so much money that I would even give a dollar to one of the Abbotsford panhandlers I despise so much. Perhaps I'll just make them a card that says "Get a job!" - I bet they would think the giraffe stamp is cute too! Or maybe I can use the dragonfly one, or the worm.

### TRAVELLING CLYDE

So, as many of you know Clyde, Tracey K. & I hit the road to Winnipeg in the Spring & spent 2 days driving there and 2 days driving back. LONG DAYS. Admittedly, the drive from Abbotsford to Calgary wasn't bad – beautiful mountains, lovely rest stops, etc. Clyde was freaking but enjoyed the pit stops, though at first I think he thought that I was going to abandon him, poor guy! Then the hotel thing went okay, Clyde even pooped – outside of the hotel. All was well. But, the second day was BRUTAL! It kept feeling like we were making progress and then you'd see the sign, 500 Km till Regina, 500 Km till Winnipeg. And Saskatchewan has no regular rest stops & the one I did see was closed. Closed! I had a little outburst at a 711 Parking lot. I felt bad enough as it was making Clyde drive all day but not having a decent place to stop for him really pissed me off. Anyways, we did make it. And then on the way back it was the drive to Calgary that seemed to fly by and the drive from Calgary home took forever. Go figure! Anyways, the greatest part of it all other than the visiting was Clyde's seatbelt. He was cooperative, though clearly would have preferred to do without but he looked like such a traveler with it on. It was great & despite everything I know he really enjoyed Mom's yard & remembered the good old days back on MacAulay. Would I do it again? Maybe...

# Hal's Place

I bet you can't wait to find out more about Hal. Yes, he's the newest member of my family & very cute, too. He came to live here in June and it has been...interesting...ever since.

I thought about getting a cat but kept talking myself out of it because Clyde is a true Cat-chaser. He'd bark until he was hoarse if he even just saw the neighbour's cat for a second. But, I do love cats & think of my first cat Sissy often. So, I went to dinner, Mexican – yum, with a family friend and came home with a cat. I just can't say 'no' – it's this thing I have and so it went from 'do you know anyone who wants a cat?' to 'come and see him for yourself' to 'take him home'. So I did. His original family moved to Toronto and their neighbour took him but the neighbour's cat kept trying to beat him up so my friend took him but travels for work and was going away for 4 days and then for 3 days the following week so knew he couldn't stay by himself that whole time. And then here comes me, 'can't say no' girl with a soft spot for cats and Voila! I inherit Hal.

At first I had hoped to find a home for him but the drive to my place made me feel so bad – he was meowing & looked so forlorn in his basket – that I did not want to cart him off to just any other place. I wanted to find him a good home. But no one I knew wanted a cat, or at least not another cat, or a long-haired cat, or whatever the case was so that good home turned into *my* home. Once I came to terms with owning a cat I also had to make Clyde come to terms with it. This took about 4 months. First of all, I used my spare room as Hal's room & tied it off so Clyde couldn't get in but Hal was free to come & go.

It took him a few weeks to come out & then he started coming out only

when Clyde was outside. After a couple of months he was much more sure of himself and would snoop around the house & just hide or run into his room if Clyde barked.

Clyde just didn't know what to make of this creature. He really is a good natured dog but he didn't know whether to chase it or eat it or what. He's getting cataracts so wouldn't always notice Hal sneaking into a room but when he did he'd whine & bark & get up and chase him back into the spare room. If Clyde saw Hal through the opening into that room he would bark like a madman. I thought I had made a huge mistake. But, then one day I saw Hal & Clyde in the living room and there was no chasing or barking. This new peace continued, and was only occasionally broken by a bark here & there. Then one day Clyde & Hal were sitting on the same couch. And, then I saw them playing – which is really just Hal pawing Clyde in the face & Clyde huffing at Hal. I no longer felt guilty about distressing Clyde in his old age or keeping Hal in an unfriendly household. They were *buddies* or at least co-habitants that were civil to each other.

Hal likes to lay on Clyde's couch & Clyde tries to be considerate and sit on the other end though it's just too short & Hal takes off before he gets crushed. Hal wants to go outside with Clyde & always has to be in the middle, & therefore underfoot, during any household event. He particularly likes when I sweep. He hides & then leaps out and attacks the broom. It's really the silliest thing. He is an indoor cat because he always has been, has no front claws & I don't want him to eat the birds outside. We also have coyotes, raccoons and feisty neighbour cats around here so I am afraid Hal might not survive in the wilds.

I guess I am just a worry wort kind of mother but I think it's for the best. The problem now is that Hal *wants* to go outside and has made it as far as the steps a few times. Luckily, so far he's chickened out but he may just get bold enough to keep going and then what? If you love something you should set it free...or keep it locked in the house. I am in support of the latter, at least in this specific case.

Hal has really taken the house over, too. I've had to move things around after a few 'accidents' and other than the kitchen counter I think he's been everywhere. Hal also enjoys knocking things over, and preferably off and onto the floor. He likes to drink out of my glass & will knock it over to make it easier. He also enjoys kneading me, particularly in my cushy belly – ow! Watch the boob! – and will position himself in between me & my book in order to get the maximum attention possible. Hal also likes to gnaw on my arm and meows & carries a Bulbasaur around the house. Really, he's quite a personality and a charmer.

Clyde still gets a bit jealous if Hal's allowed in the kitchen when I'm cooking or goes on my lap while I'm eating. How can I explain that I can't discipline a cat? Hal does what he chooses when he chooses and the best I can do is give him a shove in the right direction, literally. It must appear to Clyde that I let Hal run roughshod all over me but the reality is I have little choice. I guess I'm just a sucker for a furry face.

To appease Clyde I make sure I give him pure Clyde time. I say 'good night' to Clyde & give him a pet and say 'see ya later Mister Clyde' when I leave and 'hello Mr. Clyde, how was your day' when I get home. It's just that now it's followed by a 'hello' or whatever to "Mister Hal" too.